Lovely Strange Dark

CHIYOKO CHOCOLAT

BY KUJIRA

CHAPTER 5

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lovelystrangedark.wordpress.com

RECIPE 5

WELL THEN,
LET'S GO.
WHERE ARE WE GOING?
I TOLD YOU, YOU'LL FIND OUT WHEN WE GET THERE.
OH YEAH,
HOLD THIS.
?

WHOA!
WHAT IS THIS? IT'S HEAVY.
HEAVY
IT SMELLS LIKE CACAO...?
HEY, DON'T HOLD IT LIKE THAT!
YOUR BODY HEAT WILL MELT IT.
USE THE HANDLE!
.....

HOW'S YOUR COLD? ALL GOOD?
OH... I'VE JUST GOT A LITTLE COUGH NOW.
IT'S NOT LIKE I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU OR WHATEVER. I JUST DON'T WANT TO CATCH IT.
.....

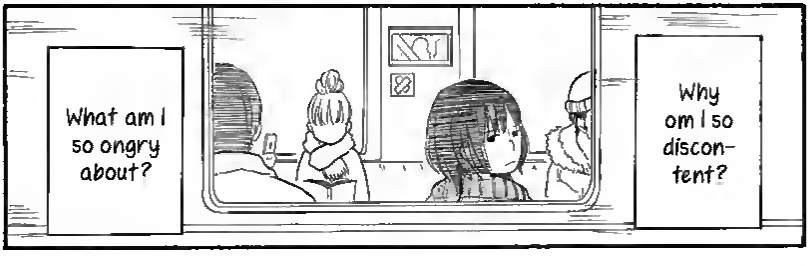
...
WHAT?
...HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN DAD LEFT?
SHOES OFF.
AMAZING THAT YOU CAN REMEMBER THAT FAR BACK.
HUH!
I WAS FIVE... OR SIX.

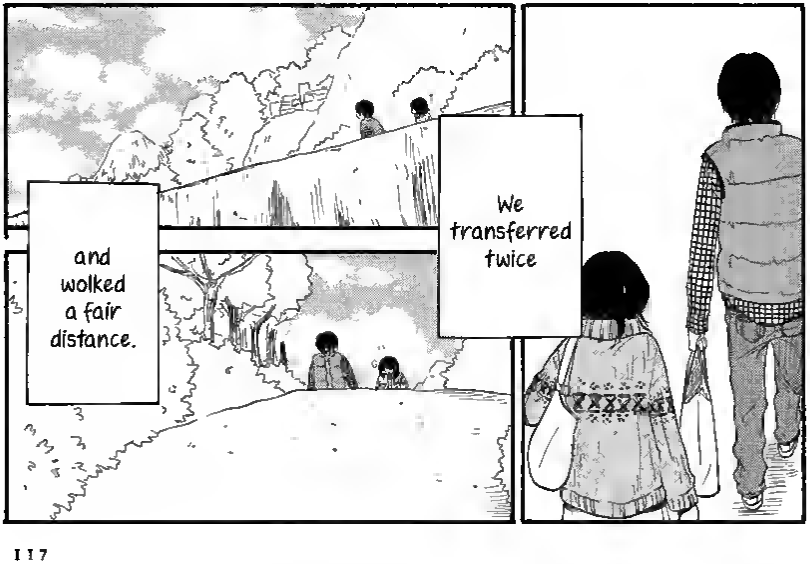
I WAS THINKING ...
THAT MAYBE MEMORIES
GET PRETTIER THE OLDER THEY ARE.
PRET-TIER...?
YEAH.
THINGS HURT "NOW", SO WE THINK THAT THE "PAST" WAS BETTER AND PRETTY IT UP TO SUIT OUR NEEDS.
SO WE CLING TO THE NOTION THAT THE PAST THAT WAS PROBABLY BETTER, RIGHT?
...LIKE MY SISTER,
AND YOUR MUM.

AND EVEN YOU, CHIYOKO.
!
WHAT?
WHY ME TOO...?!
I'M NOT PRETTYING ANYTHING UP!
CHIYOKO, WE'RE ON THE TRAIN.
OH.

HAHA HA!
fump
WHY ARE YOU BEING SO IMMATURE?
.....
ISN'T THAT WHY
YOU HAVE A PERMANENT CREASE BETWEEN YOUR EYEBROWS?
.....

TAP
I....
ALWAYS LOOK THIS WAY?


What am I so angry about?
Why am I so discontent?


We transferred twice
and walked a fair distance.

We finally arrived at—
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
I JUST GOT OVER MY COLD ...
WE'RE HERE.
...A NURSING HOME...?
Sunflower Nursing Home
GO FOR IT...?
WE'LL BE HANDING THOSE OUT. GO FOR IT.
WE'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU.
HI, I'M OKABAYASHI.

EVERYONE, THESE TWO BROUGHT YOU SOME TEA SNACKS. THEY'LL BE HANDING THEM OUT NOW.
HELLO.
OH, S-SORRY.
HERE YOU GO.
COME ON, CHIYOKO.
H-HERE YOU ARE.
OH?
I ALSO HAVE
HERE YOU GO.

A DAUGHTER NAMED "CHIYOKO". SHE'S TURNING FIVE.
SHE CRIES AT NIGHT BECAUSE SHE'S SCARED OF A DARK SPOT ON THE CEILING.
OH MY.
WHEN I MAKE HER HOT CHOCOLATE,
HUH?
DA...
SHE SMILES
WITH CHOCOLATE ALL OVER HER MOUTH.

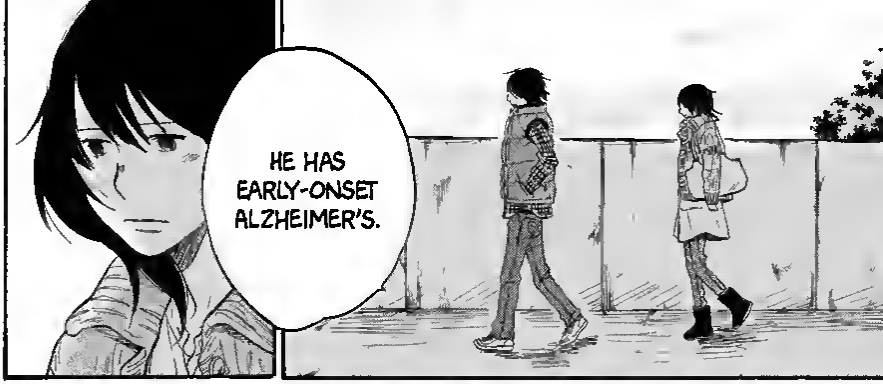
U—
...YES?
UM...
I...
UM...
W-WHY ...
AH!
MISS?
WHAT'S WRONG?

DON'T CRY... YOU'LL UPSET EVERYONE.
JUST SMILE.
D...
DAD...
DA...
I-I WANT SOME HOT CHOCOLATE...
... OKAY.
GOT IT.

OH!
I NEED TO MAKE HOT CHOCO-LATE.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING, MR. KUBOTA? LET'S SIT DOWN.
I'LL MAKE SOME RIGHT NOW.

ARE YOU OKAY?
OH NO, WHAT'S WRONG?

THANK GOD... HE'S ALIVE.
...THANK GOD.


HE HAS EARLY-ONSET ALZHEIMER'S.

IT ALL HAPPENED BEFORE I WAS BORN,
SO I DON'T REALLY KNOW THE DETAILS.

MY MOM AND MY SISTER'S DAD HAD BEEN FRIENDS WITH OUR DAD SINCE CONFECTIONARY SCHOOL.

MY SISTER'S DAD DIED IN AN ACCIDENT WHEN SHE WAS AROUND EIGHT.
WHAT?!
MY MUM WAS GRIEVING,
AND OUR DAD WAS THERE TO COMFORT HER.
AFTER A WHILE
I WOUND UP IN HER BELLY.
OF COURSE, YOU WERE ALREADY BORN, CHIYOKO.

IT IS.
...YEAH,
THAT'S AWFUL.
.....
THE TWO OF THEM FOR BEING TOGETHER
THAT'S WHY YOUR MUM COULD NEVER FORGIVE
THAT MEANS
HEY!
HOLD IT!
...WAIT!

THEY TOLD HER ABOUT IT
MY MUM KNEW?!
BEFORE I WAS BORN.

...AND WHAT ABOUT HIS ILL-NESS?
WELL,
HIS FIRST SYMPTOMS APPEARED AFTER I WAS BORN, WHEN DAD HAD ALREADY LEFT YOUR HOUSE.
...HE PROBABLY COULDN'T HAVE GONE BACK TO YOU
EVEN IF HE HAD WANTED TO.
I FIGURE HIS FEELINGS ABOUT THAT

ARE WHY YOU'RE STILL FIVE YEARS OLD IN HIS MIND, CHIYOKO.
...IT'S KIND OF SAD, RIGHT?
I MEAN, I'M HERE,
...I'M NOT
FIVE ANY-MORE...
I'm
AND YOU AREN'T FIVE ANYMORE.

living in the "now".
...EVEN IF YOUR MEMORIES ARE PRETTIED UP,
IF THEY CAN ENCOURAGE YOU TO MOVE FORWARD, ISN'T THAT A GOOD THING?
...YEAH.

HEY!
WHAT?
DOES YOUR SISTER STAY AT THE SHOP AFTER SHE CLOSES UP?
NO, SHE GOES HOME AFTER CLOSING. WHY?
...WHAT ARE YOU YELLING FOR?
ALL RIGHT!
YEAH, I GUESS SO.

HOW ABOUT THE KEY? DO YOU HAVE ONE?
...I DO... WHY?
IS THERE LEFTOVER CHOCO-LATE?
THEY'RE NEVER SOLD OUT.
AFTER SHE CLOSES UP, LET ME IN!
WHAT?!
WHAAT?!
OKAY, LET'S RUN FOR IT!

...AND? IS SHE STILL THERE?
SHE'S GONE HOME.
SO WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING, CHIYOKO?
I'LL BUY ONE OF EACH KIND OF CHOCOLATE IN THIS STORE!

?
AND GET ME A PEN AND PAPER.
DOESN'T MATTER. GRAB THEM FOR ME!
HUH?! THERE'S AT LEAST 40 DIFFERENT KINDS.

...WHAT ARE YOU DOING...?
GRAB
I'M GOING TO EAT THEM ALL.
WHAAT?!

HERE.